

Graduates seek good health through DOC

Media Contact:

Department of Correction

Java Ahmed

(317) 234-1693

E-mail: jahmed@doc.in.gov

By Jerry Battiste

jerry.battiste@flyergroup.com

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Commissioner J. David Donahue

Earlier this month, Department of Correction Commissioner J. David Donahue gave the commencement address for the second graduation of female offenders in the methamphetamine treatment program at the Rockville Correctional Facility.

Donahue encouraged the graduating class of 39 offenders to serve as an example for the next offenders who enroll in the program.

"Be a success story," he said. "Don't use the rear view mirror to see where you have been, but look ahead to see where you are going."

The program, entitled Clean Lifestyle is Freedom Forever (CLIFF), is America's first prison-based treatment program for female offenders with methamphetamine addiction, one of four prison-based meth treatment programs started in Indiana since April 2005.

"The staff at the facility have worked very hard to deliver this program that focuses on assisting in the recovery and relapse-prevention from meth abuse and all other associated drug addictions," Donahue said.

Pride in a methamphetamine addict is in short supply these days, as the number of addicts continues to explode nationally putting a heavy financial burden on state and federal programs designed to both incarcerate and treat offenders.

The number of adult offenders incarcerated in the Indiana Department of Corrections charged with dealing or possession of methamphetamine and cocaine increased by 34 percent from 2000 to '04.

According to Narcotics Anonymous of Southern California, in 1999 alone 9.4 million people in the U.S. reported trying methamphetamine at least once in their lifetime and the highest rate of meth use was among the 18 to 25 age group with more than 5 percent of them reporting some use. Meth lab seizures have gone up 577 percent nationally since 1995 with the largest number being reported in rural parts of Indiana, Kentucky, and Oklahoma. In fact, statistics over the past few years show Oklahoma among the nation's leader in meth labs, arrests, addiction, and cases.

In 1994, the Drug Enforcement Administration seized 63 meth labs nationwide. That figure climbed to 879 in 1996 and 1,627 in '98. According to the Indiana State Police, the first meth lab in Indiana was discovered in 1992 in Greene County. Annual meth lab busts here have grown from less than 50 in 1998 to almost 1,600 in 2004. That number did decline slightly in 2005 to a little less than 1,000, following stricter guidelines for the purchase of over-the-counter medications used to make meth. But that number does not include lab busts made by other agencies statewide. With those numbers included, the total jumps into the thousands, in Indiana alone.

Besides the obvious, Donahue had good reason to offer the most recent program graduates an optimistic look at their future: Initial recidivism for CLIFF graduates is less than 3 percent, compared to a general population rate at about 8 percent released during the same period of time, he said.

By completing the nine- to 12-month voluntary treatment program, offenders are eligible for six-month time cuts. Since the program began, there have been 530 adult male, 116 adult female, and 29 juvenile male CLIFF graduates.

About The Department of Correction

The Department employs over 8,000 employees and houses 24,000 adult and juveniles in 32 facilities, ranging from minimum to maximum custody, prison camps, juvenile facilities and work release centers. The Department's home page on the Internet can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection>. The Department's Re-entry Site can be found: <http://www.reentry.in.gov>.